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William Evan Timmons (1930-)

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 20, 1972

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your January 18 letter to the President in reference to the two requests for disaster assistance made by former Governor John Bell Williams.

As you know, the President declared a major disaster for the southwestern portion of the State of Mississippi yesterday. For your files, I am enclosing a copy of the release. The request for disaster assistance in the area in and around the City of Laurel is now being processed and a decision should be reached at an early date.

With cordial regards,

Sincerely,

William E. Timmons
Assistant to the President

Honorable James O. Eastland
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Enclosure
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

The President today declared a major disaster for the State of Mississippi. Heavy rains and flooding occurred in the southwestern portion of the State in December, and the President's action will permit the use of Federal funds in relief and recovery efforts.

In his request for a Presidential declaration, Mississippi Governor John Bell Williams had advised the President that estimates of damage to public and private property, including agricultural properties and livestock, had exceeded $800,000. The bulk of the funds available from the President's Disaster Fund will be used for the repair and restoration of public roads and facilities.

The President declared a major disaster for Mississippi in February, 1971, following the tornadoes which devastated the State on February 22. Allocations from the President's Disaster Fund for Federal disaster assistance have exceeded $4,000,000 to date.

Federal relief activities in Mississippi are being coordinated by the President's Office of Emergency Preparedness. Disaster specialists from OEP's Region IV Office in Atlanta have been in the area, working under William C. McMillen, Regional Director. Mr. Ronald Van Dame, Disaster Assistance Coordinator, OEP Region IV, has been designated as the Federal Coordinating Officer to work with the State in providing Federal disaster assistance under Public Law 91-606.